

After addressing these matters that worry adults, boyd dedicates the remaining chapters of her book to issues often overlooked by them. Concentrating on issues of inequality in Chapter 6—mostly in relation to race, ethnicity, and class—boyd summarizes utopian and dystopian views of Internet technologies in order to demonstrate how *current* social divisions and inequalities are reproduced online. As such, underprivileged teens, online, do not benefit from the levelling advantages that techno-utopians see in the development of Internet technologies.

Chapter 7 enables boyd to discuss how popular understandings of teens as “digital natives” disadvantage those who have less Internet access and consequently may develop more limited technical or media literacy skills. By identifying teens as “digital natives,” and by obscuring individual differences, we do not properly address issues of access, critical thinking, and media literacy skills that would enable everyone to profit from the offerings of the Internet.

The last chapter enables boyd to once again mobilize the concept of the networked public, emphasizing that a majority of the teens in her study complained about how little free time they had to meet with friends, while social media enabled them to do just that. She underlines how, by engaging with social media, teens not only develop a variety of skills, but also engage in political debate and public life. Though social media and the Internet make negative aspects of teens’ lives visible, they also enable teens to showcase more positive presentations. Restricting teens’ access to social media does not lessen or eliminate negative experiences, as the Internet only mirrors individuals’ offline realities. The solution, then, is perhaps to empower teens to make the best possible use of social media.

Overall, boyd pushes readers to question their concerns surrounding teens’ online engagement. Considering that social media provides teens with opportunities to engage in public and with various publics, she suggests that this is perhaps the real source of discomfort for many members of non-teen generations.

Laurence Clennett-Sirois, University of Ottawa



**New Media: An Introduction (Second Canadian Edition).** By Terry Flew & Richard Smith. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2014. 336 pp. ISBN: 9780199005505.

In the fall of 2012, I received a copy of the 2011 edition of *New Media: An Introduction* to write a review. This was perfectly timed, as I had recently decided to use it for a course I was teaching the following semester, and this would give me a good feel for its value as a pedagogical text. As happens much more often than I would like to admit, the semester ended, another began, and the text ended up buried under apparently more pressing materials. After a gentle reminder several months later from the review editor, I went over my notes, read through the text again, wrote, and finally submitted my review. One of the key themes that I had addressed in that original review was the

idea of the rapid changes that take place in digital media, and how this makes currency a significant issue in texts on this topic. To drive the point home in a very real way, the editor contacted me again to say that a new edition of the text would be out before the review I had written would be published. We agreed to shelve the review and wait for the new edition. After having gone through the new edition, I can see that the first review is still incredibly relevant and so much of it will still be discussed here, while addressing the changes that have been made, many of which have dealt with some of my earlier concerns.

To those of us who came of age in the late 70s and early 80s, it is difficult not to look back incredulously at the rapid innovation in and adoption of technology, like video game consoles, home computers, Internet use, cellphones, and other now ubiquitous forms of new media. I vividly remember when the notion of the local video arcade gave way to this mystical idea of a gaming console that would shift the public gaming space into the privacy of our homes. In retrospect, I see how Atari, Intellivision, and ColecoVision fundamentally altered my ideas of public and private spaces, of community, and of entertainment, and how these constantly changed with new platforms and new techniques of use. I am certain that I never realized the importance of it at the time, as I was so immersed in it that it seemed just a natural progression and a part of everyday life. Almost all aspects of our young lives were directly tied to these emerging technologies, and as we look back on the past 30+ years of these advances, we are better able to critically assess their implementation and their social ramifications. The textbook *New Media: An Introduction* (Second Canadian Edition) by Terry Flew and Richard Smith offers a similar, more recent look at the changing world of technology, and, with a strong historical setup, brings it to the present within a Canadian frame. Originally an Australian text written by Flew and adapted to its Canadian context by Simon Fraser University professor Richard Smith, it has both positive and negative aspects to its use as an undergraduate text in Technology or Communications Studies, but its important positive contributions easily outweigh the negative ones.

In the preface to the first Canadian edition, which is only a couple of years old, Smith notes that this is “a topic that is subject to constant change” (p. xi) and, as such, is an incredibly difficult discussion to remain current both with regard to the technologies discussed and the theories applied. In the preface to the new second edition, he also notes that these changes are not solely in technology but also in their uses, as “new media is, by its very nature, extremely malleable and fluid in how it is used” (p. vii). In the same way that new media is separated by what came before it by the active participation of the consumer/user, the text itself is set up to afford readers the opportunity to research topics further by providing useful websites and additional readings at chapters’ ends, as well as providing discussion questions, class activity ideas, and topics for debate. Not only does this allow the reader/student to travel on their own to appropriate sources for potentially updated statistical data, but it also provides a framework through which the chapter components can be discussed or disseminated in a pedagogical setting. The latter may be the key strength this text has for use in the classroom. Encouraging students to engage with the information at a level of deeper inquisition

through these same media is, in and of itself, a very telling example of how these technologies can function and how quickly the data in this field can become out-dated.

The new version of the book published in 2014 addresses one of the major concerns I had with the first edition (and a concern that is generally applied to all texts in this field): some of the examples or technologies discussed can appear long past their prime. For instance, in the first edition, the discussion around mobile phones points to Canada's own *Research in Motion* (RIM, makers of the BlackBerry) as "one of the leading manufacturers of smartphones" (p. 85). Most certainly just a few years ago RIM was considered as such, but, times have changed. Now, RIM is struggling amid an increasingly competitive mobile market and is fighting to keep what little market share it has left. The new 2014 edition has not only addressed this, but it has done so rather deftly. Within the same discussion of mobility as in the first edition, the updated version notes that at one time many Canadians would have had a phone made by a Canadian company, RIM, and discusses why the BlackBerry was as successful as it was. It then notes the reversal in fortunes and the uncertain future. Rather than simply adjusting a couple of sentences and moving on, however, Smith includes a full boxed off "case study" on the following page that goes in-depth into "Canada's smartphone" and discusses the BlackBerry's history in terms of economics, convergence, social media, software, politics, and even as a potential signifier of taste.

On an increasingly positive side for Canadian undergrad students, couching these mobile discussions in our nation's context by discussing how Telus, Bell, and Rogers (and their subsidiary brands like Fido, Koodo, and Virgin) are set up and how Canadian regulations frame their businesses really helps to put a familiar and practical face on what can be a daunting subject, theoretically if not logistically. The introduction of the WIND Mobile and Mobilicity players into the Canadian market demonstrates to students how Canadian policy is conceived and implemented, as well as applied, in the real world. This is one of the text's strongest points.

Yet, considering how suddenly things can change in this area of research and study, the text does incredibly well to remain relevant to larger discourses on the participatory nature of new media, the always-shifting notion of our "creative industries," and the links to the economic and political order that underpin a larger global economy in knowledge. In my estimation as a Canadian educator, this edition's inclusion of even more salient Canadian examples and case studies makes the text significantly more accessible for Canadian students in this subject area and addresses an apparent dearth of similarly focussed texts. This was the primary reason that I chose it for a 4<sup>th</sup> year course I was teaching on "Issues in an Information Society." I had my students prepare a weekly reflection on their chapter readings, and I will confess that I was somewhat surprised by their dismissals of the text as "old." If anything, this allowed us to frame our class discussions in such a manner as to highlight how the history and use of new media technologies have led us to the (momentarily?) current "read-write-web" iteration and what this could mean in the future.

I suspect that in the same way that my complete immersion in the changes of the 1980s obfuscated much of the socio-political contexts of these changes and developments to me, my students' direct integration in their new media world and its ubiqui-

tousness has given them blinders. Lamenting what they saw as “stating the obvious,” it presents the opportunity to question our students about why or how we have come to feel this way about the technologies that surround us. For this reason, I feel that this text is an important one, as it can potentially lift the veil of naturalness that exists around new media, at which point we can finally begin to critique it in the manner that Flew and Smith do.

Darren Blakeborough, University of the Fraser Valley



**The Symbolic, The Sublime, and Slavoj Žižek Theory of Film.** By Matthew Flisfeder. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 208 pp. ISBN: 9780230341470.

It was more than two decades ago that Joan Copjec put forward her compelling argument about the misappropriation of Lacanian psychoanalysis by film theorists. At that time the problem concerned the tendency among film theorists to conflate Foucault’s theory of gaze and apparatus (*dispositif*) with Lacan’s theory of the gaze and mirror stage. She wrote: “[This is] [w]hat I take to be the central misconception of film theory: believing itself to be following Lacan, it conceives the [cinematic] screen as mirror; in doing so, however, it operates in ignorance of, and at the expense of, Lacan’s more radical insight, whereby mirror is conceived as screen” (Copjec, 1994, pp. 15–17). To be sure, the problem was not that true believers somehow misunderstood Lacanian psychoanalysis, but rather that their premature understanding of Lacan’s early theories, compounded by an overzealous use of *bricolage* as writing strategy (which strikes me as the scholarly equivalent of “dabbling”), ruled out the possible discovery of his more relevant insight about the necessity of the screen. More to the point, it seemed to Copjec that the valuable psychoanalytic concept of the subject was eclipsed by an overemphasis on the Foucauldian notion of apparatus, so Copjec urged film theorists to put the subject back into the picture.

Today there remain two commitments worth reaffirming for film theory: the necessity of mirror conceived as screen, and the necessity of reaffirming a commitment to a theory of the subject through psychoanalysis and political philosophy. As it happens, there has been a growing exclusion and distaste toward psychoanalytic insights by recent film theorists. This has been best exemplified by the turn toward “post-theory” by David Bordwell (1996) and others. Matthew Flisfeder’s book situates itself somewhere at the end of the debate that occurred between David Bordwell and Slavoj Žižek. His book insists on the need for a sophisticated and politically aware psychoanalytic film theory, and he makes an effort to answer the question about the relevance of Lacanian film theory today. The question is answered through a number of crucial displacements, of which I will note two: first, readers are provided with an accessible introduction to Žižekian film analysis (including rapid discussions of the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Ferdinand de Saussure, and Jacques Lacan), and second, readers quickly